



Embassy of the United States of America

PEPFAR: A Decade of Saving Lives



A young girl gets her blood drawn as part of a PEPFAR-funded initiative centered on the health of orphans and vulnerable children. *Sarah Day Smith/PEPFAR*

In 2003, the U.S. Congress passed legislation that established a historic and transforming global health program now known as PEPFAR, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

At the time PEPFAR was conceived, the world was witnessing the destruction of an entire generation of individuals and the reversal of remarkable health and

development gains, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Rates of new HIV infections were rising rapidly, and hospitals, communities and families were often too under-resourced and overwhelmed to cope with the enormity of this burden. In 2003, despite the availability of lifesaving antiretroviral therapy in most developed countries, in southern Africa and other regions of the developing world an

HIV diagnosis was a virtual death sentence because few had access to such drugs.

Since 2003, the situation has changed dramatically. Plummeting life expectancy rates in much of Africa have been reversed; HIV-infected but healthy fathers and mothers who are receiving therapy are able to return to work, care for their families and spur economic development. Doctors, nurses and

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community health workers, who once had little to offer their patients beyond a more dignified death, are delivering lifesaving drugs to millions of people. AIDS-related mortality has declined by more than 26 percent since its peak in 2005. Where despair once cut a devastating swath through so many communities and countries, hope has been renewed.

With regard to the prevention of HIV infection, new HIV infections have declined by nearly 19 percent globally since PEPFAR began. Between 2009 and 2011, new HIV infections among children, still an important component of the epidemic in many southern African countries and other regions in the developing world, declined by 24 percent globally, compared with a 23 percent decline in the previous six years. Not only is progress occurring, but its pace is accelerating.

According to a 2013 Institute of Medicine report, “PEPFAR has played a transformative role with its contribution to the global response to HIV.” As of



A pharmacist, trained and funded through PEPFAR, dispenses antiretroviral medications at a hospital in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Vietnam is one of PEPFAR's 15 focus countries. *CDC Vietnam*

September 2012, PEPFAR was directly supporting 5.1 million people on antiretroviral therapy — a more than threefold increase in just the past four years. In 2012 alone, PEPFAR reached more than 750,000 pregnant women living with HIV with antiretroviral



PEPFAR's Medical Education Partnership Initiative is helping medical education facilities in sub-Saharan Africa train health care providers by improving their access to technology.

Richard Lord for Fogarty/NIH

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Launched in 2010, PEPFAR's Medical Education Partnership Initiative (MEPI) strengthened the capacity of countries to take ownership of their HIV/AIDS programs by supporting medical education and research in 12 sub-Saharan African institutions.

With an emphasis on the local relevance of its training and education programs, MEPI works to increase the number of trained health care workers, to retain those health care workers in the areas where they are needed most and to support research that is relevant to the region. PEPFAR plans to invest as much as \$130 million over five years in the program with grants being awarded directly to African institutions.

drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission, allowing an estimated 230,000 babies who would have otherwise been infected to be born without HIV.

One key driver of this progress is the development and implementation of a combination prevention program. Just as it became clear that multiple HIV medicines, when used in concert, more effectively control replication of the virus in the body, it was shown that

multiple prevention interventions, when implemented together, can more effectively reduce new HIV infections. This evolution in preventing HIV infection has come about thanks to scientific innovation and practical implementation.

In Port Victoria, Kenya, a man and his wife continue to live after receiving antiretroviral therapy through PEPFAR. *USAID Kenya*



Landmark scientific advances, coupled with lessons learned from a decade of implementing programs under PEPFAR, have yielded the tools, knowledge and experience needed to achieve an AIDS-free generation.

Recent statistics show that the promise of an AIDS-free generation is truly within reach. More countries than ever before have reached, or surpassed, the programmatic tipping points in their HIV epidemics — the point at which the annual increase in adult patients receiving treatment exceeds the annual number of new adult HIV infections. Reaching this tipping point is a key indication that a country is on the path to achieving an AIDS-free generation — and the more countries that achieve this goal, the closer we will be to ending the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

While PEPFAR is the largest and most successful foreign health assistance program in history, it is clear that the United States cannot be alone in this endeavor. Other partners, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, multilateral organizations, the private sector, civil society and host countries must all share in the responsibility. In PEPFAR's second decade, countries with a high burden of HIV disease must assume a greater role in addressing the health needs of their own people by building strong and sustainable health systems.



In 2011, U.S. President George W. Bush visited an AIDS clinic supported by PEPFAR in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. PEPFAR was launched by Bush in 2003. *AP Images*

PEPFAR represents the very best of the United States — the extraordinary generosity and compassion of the American people. Through PEPFAR, the United States is helping to save the lives of millions of people across the globe.

The text above is adapted from an editorial by Ambassador Eric Goosby and Dr. Anthony Fauci marking PEPFAR'S 10th anniversary. Goosby is the U.S. global AIDS coordinator and head of the U.S. Department of State's Office of Global Health Diplomacy. Fauci is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health.